

Communities of Change

joint advocacy for future smart agriculture



'Future smart' agriculture for green and fair economies

The Communities of Change Alliance offers opportunities for joint advocacy with Both ENDS. Over the coming five years, Both ENDS will work with civil society organisations (CSOs) with an interest in doing advocacy work for agro-ecological farming, the right to food, land and water rights, participatory land use planning, sustainable management of natural resources and (agro)biodiversity. The aim is to create political room and inclusive policies for sustainable or 'future smart' agriculture for small-scale producers. There will be a specific focus on women and a country specific focus on working with producers in Bolivia, the Philippines, Ghana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia.

The industrial approach to agriculture, based on unlimited access to water, nutrients and land drives producers towards seeking economies of scale and becoming more specialised. While it has resulted in increased agricultural output, on a global scale the benefits have not been equally shared. Small-scale producers (and particularly women) were not able to connect with these developments and have often been disadvantaged by them. Furthermore this model has had many negative environmental impacts. It is worth recalling the findings of the IAASTD report 'Agriculture at a Crossroads' (2009) which stated that "business as usual is no longer an option". Both ENDS has received a variety of requests from CSOs who wish to do (or strengthen their) advocacy work on this theme. They see the need to improve their knowledge of the issues and their advocacy skills in

order to establish effective dialogues with companies and governments and to be able to campaign effectively over the issues that concern them, such as the impact of large-scale plantations on livelihoods and ecosystems or compliance with national and international laws and guidelines.

Advocating for change

In 2009, Both ENDS and Cordaid agreed to jointly establish the Communities of Change Alliance to work with and support CSOs concerned with issues connected with agriculture and sustainability. The alliance explicitly focuses on small-scale producers, particularly women in a number of selected countries. The assumption is that effective advocacy and dialogue will give these groups more political visibility and help them create a climate in which they can improve their production and make it more sustainable. This should lead to higher incomes, greater food security and them having a stronger position in agricultural value chains. The role of Both ENDS within this alliance will be to share its knowledge and expertise about ecological sustainability and networking and advocating for green and fair economies. Therefore, the advocacy focus within the Communities of Change Alliance is on sustainability issues. The main areas in which we think there is a need for stronger southern-based advocacy are likely to include the following: sustainable or 'future smart' agriculture, agro-ecological production, agro-energy crops, the right to food, land and water, biodiversity, non-timber forest products, agro-forestry, certification of sustainable production, negotiated approaches to natural resource management and participatory land use planning.

Advocating for change

Sustainable agriculture is an essential part of a green and fair economy. Sustainable agriculture requires an enabling environment where policies address the rights and needs of small-scale producers and focus on 'future smart' agriculture. This involves identifying and addressing the policies (local, national, regional and international) that hinder sustainable agriculture and advocating those policies and proposals that can stimulate sustainable agriculture.

Community of Change advocacy teams

Both ENDS offers CSOs the possibility to join and work within Community of Change advocacy teams on specific policy themes.

We wish to invite like-minded organisations to join our Communities of Change advocacy teams, to work together to identify possible themes for joint advocacy. After that, Both ENDS will facilitate joint working sessions firstly geared at problem analysis and then at formulating a joint advocacy objective, which will include possible solutions and/or alternative policy proposals. Through a power or stakeholder analysis the advocacy teams will then identify allies (people or organisations with shared or similar interests) as well as opponents, their interests and arguments. On the base of these steps, the advocacy teams will then formulate a clear message, including a position statement and arguments to convince others. After this, we will make a plan of action identifying the people we want to convince and a timeline for action.

The Community of Change advocacy teams will offer platforms for organisations with a shared interest in promoting and advocating sustainable or 'future-smart' agriculture. Broad-based alliances can have more influence on policies and practices than solitary voices. Organisations involved in the advocacy teams will also be able to support each other's message and help each other develop their advocacy skills.

Both ENDS: Connecting people for change

Both ENDS has 25 years of experience in working with CSOs from all over the world on issues of ecological sustainability and social justice. We have been working on the impact of commodities (agro-energy, palm oil, soy, cut flowers, mining) and of large-scale infrastructure projects (dams, waterways, roads, harbours) on peoples' livelihoods and their environment as well as exposing the (unintended) negative effects of policies and capital flows. At the same time we advocate and support more sustainable and fairer (policy) alternatives and approaches. These include agroforestry, non-timber forest products, the certification of sustainable production, participatory land use planning, negotiated approaches to natural resource management etc. Through networking and exchange we strengthen the position of CSOs in debates over the sustainable and equitable management of natural resources and increase their capacity to make a difference. We work with CSOs, advocating change that creates the political space to develop inclusive policies for sustainability.

For more information on the Communities of Change advocacy teams

Both ENDS:
Nathalie van Haren: nh@bothends.org
www.bothends.org
+31 (0)20 530 6600

